EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM

The Police (Conduct) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2026

1. Introduction

This Explanatory Memorandum has been prepared by the Department of Justice to accompany the Statutory Rule (details above) which is laid before the Northern Ireland Assembly.

The Statutory Rule is made under powers conferred by sections 25, 26 and 59(8) of the Police (Northern Ireland) Act 1998, and is subject to the negative resolution procedure.

2. Purpose

The Statutory Rule will amend the Police (Conduct) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2016, with twelve changes that will constitute improvements to the police misconduct procedures and processes. The Rule will also reflect the recently revised Code of Ethics in statute as a schedule to the Conduct Regulations in accordance with Section 52 of the Police (Northern Ireland) Act 2000.

The Rule comes into operation on xx xx 2026.

3. Background

The Department of Justice undertook a review of the regulatory framework within which the police officer misconduct process operates. A total of twelve process improvements were taken forward alongside amendment to reflect the recently revised Code of Ethics in statute as a schedule to the Conduct Regulations, as per Section 52 of the Police Act 2000.

4. Consultation

In accordance with sections 25 and 26 of the enabling legislation the Department consulted with the Northern Ireland Policing Board, the PSNI and the Police Associations for Northern Ireland. The Office of the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland was also consulted.

5. Equality Impact

This Statutory Rule applies equally to all PSNI officers, regardless of grouping. There is no adverse impact on those listed under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998.

6. Regulatory Impact

A Regulatory Impact Assessment has not been prepared for this regulatory amendment as it has no impact on business, charities or voluntary bodies.

7. Financial Implications

The financial impact should be negligible. The changes do not result in significant financial implications. Costs are anticipated to be minimal or will result in longer term savings through improved processes. All costs are manageable from existing budgets.

8. Section 24 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998

The proposed instrument is considered compatible with section 24 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998.

9. EU Implications

Not applicable.

10. Parity or Replicatory Measure

This instrument introduces legislation governing police officers in Northern Ireland.

11. Additional Information

Not applicable.